

Associated Students

MONTANA TECH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

January 23, 2007

Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing this in support of the CAP plan.

The rise in the cost of education over the years has prevented many Montana residents from pursuing their dreams. Many of those who were not prevented from attending school are now faced with having to repay large amounts of debt. This has hurt Montana's economy by forcing graduates to find higher paying work out of state in order to repay the debt.

I have been lucky in that I have not yet had to take out a loan for school. However, I have been working quite a bit to pay for school. This comes at the expense of my GPA and is prolonging my graduation date. Besides school, I am the President of the Associated Students of Montana Tech, work a part-time job to pay for school, and volunteer firefight. Being ASMT President and firefighting are things that I have volunteered to do. I have chosen to do these instead of working more hours because I care for Montana Tech and my community.

According to the Montana Higher Education Student Assistance Corporation (MHESAC), the average Montana student in 1983 graduated with \$783 in debt. Today, the average student graduates with over \$20,000 in debt. With the current trend, where will we be in ten years?

It is the responsibility of those in power to address this issue. We cannot continue to take money away from education to the expense of tomorrow's generation. I have always believed that actions speak louder than words. It is time that Montana takes a leading role in the education field.

Montana residents have a history of a working hard and taking a common sense approach to problems. Tuition rising is a problem Montana faces and we need to approach it too with common sense. Please support the plan for freezing tuition.

Sincerely,

Chris Mjelde
Chris Mjelde
ASMT President

Get Into It!